In the Specification

Please amend the specification as follows:

On page 1, please delete the paragraph beginning on line 1 with "The present application is . . .".

On page 43, please amend the paragraph beginning on line 3 as follows:

A cDNA fragment encoding the human RNase III-like domain (C-terminal-most 466 amino acids; SEQ ID NO:37) was amplified by PCR and introduced into a BamH I site upstream and Not I site downstream. This fragment was further subcloned into the sites of the expression vector pGEX-4T-1 (Pharmacia Biotech, Piscataway, NJ) to produce the RNase III fusion protein with Glutathione S-transferase (GST) at its N-terminus. The identity of the construct was proven by DNA sequencing. The GST-RNase III fusion protein was expressed in *E. coli* strain BL21 and purified using glutathione agarose (Pharmacia Biotech, Piscataway, NJ) under native conditions with B-PER bacterial protein extraction reagent (Pierce, Rockford, IL). Control GST protein was also prepared in parallel from the pGEX-4T-1 plasmid. The purified products were identified by Coomassie staining after 12% SDS-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis and Western blot analyses with anti-RNase III peptide antibody (see examples above).